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FORT MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY - It's the Spring of 1972 and the first six RAILFAN cars are in position in the center of the photograph. Below the cars is the Post Commissary and to the right, the Post Exchange. The MOUNTAIN VIEW, which sparked the Project RAILFAN concept, is the nearest car on the siding to the right and above the "PX" in this U.S. Army Photograph.

PROJECT "RAILFAN"

By Major General (Retired) Hugh F. Foster, Jr., U.S. Army

In 1971 Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, like most Army posts, reflected many years of "deferred maintenance." This is a budgetary euphemism for "no money now ... fix it later." Among the many areas of concern to me as the Commanding General, was the deplorable condition of the quarters for some of the senior bachelor Non-Commissioned Officers.

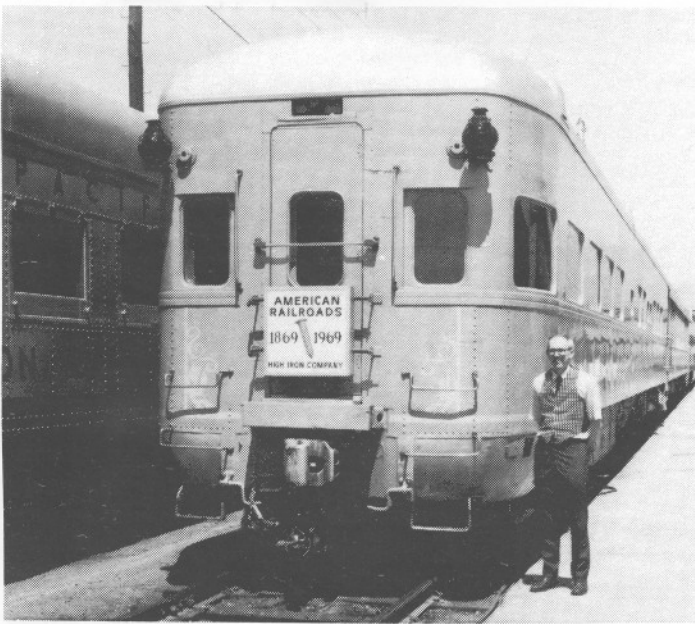
Government housing was far short of needs and off-post rental was prohibitively expensive, since Fort Monmouth is in the resort area near the North Jersey Shore. Hence, there were a large number of married senior NCO's who perforce left their families elsewhere and like their unmarried peers, lived in government quarters on post.

The Mountain View

In the Fall of 1971, a enlisted man, David Durkoop, was assigned as a student to the U.S. Army Signal School, then located at Fort Monmouth. Durkoop owned his own railroad car, the *Mountain View*. This was formerly the tail car on the Pennsylvania Railroad's famed New York-Chicago *Broadway Limited*. It was built in 1949 to Pullman Plan number 4133 and was PRR number 8419.

Durkoop requested permission to bring the *Mountain View* on post and live in it instead of the barracks. The Signal School Commandant interposed no objections. A review of

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THE MOUNTAIN VIEW - This is the car that suggested the idea of Project RAILFAN to Major General Hugh F. Foster Jr. Here it is at Salt Lake City, Utah on May 10, 1969 bringing up the rear of the Ross Rowland's *GOLDEN SPIKE LIMITED*. This train operated from New York City to commemorate the centennial of the driving of the last spike at Promontory Point, Utah of the first transcontinental railroad on that day 100 years before. This photograph is from the Bob Lorenz Collection and that's Bob standing next to the car.

RAILFAN Continued from page 1

Army Regulations disclosed numerous do's and don'ts about mobile homes and trailers, but nothing concerning railroad cars.

Therefore as CG, I operated on the premise that unless a regulation specifically required or prohibited something, there was room for judgment. So Durkoop was granted permission subject to the proviso that he reimburse any expenses incurred by the government in providing utilities and other services.

In due course the *Mountain View* rolled onto Fort Monmouth, was spotted on an available spur track and connected to the essential utilities. Durkoop moved in and was joined shortly thereafter by two other student-soldiers, whom he invited to share his abode.

After they devoted a month to cleaning and refurbishing the car, I was invited to visit the *Mountain View* and see their style of living. It was pretty plush. The two master bedrooms each had two foldaway beds, a wardrobe, private shower, toilet and four lounge chairs. The car also had a separate double bedroom with private toilet, buffet kitchen, a large lounge area as well as being air-conditioned.

Project RAILFAN Is Born

It occurred to me that if three privates could live in such comfort in a railroad car, there might be potential for improving living conditions for some senior bachelor NCO's. At that time the railroads were rapidly divesting themselves of the passenger cars Amtrak had not elected to purchase. Many stainless steel cars were easy to come by because they were then difficult to scrap.

Upon inquiring, I learned stainless steel coaches could be

purchased from the Penn Central for \$1,300 each delivered to Fort Monmouth. Therefore, I decided to see if it was feasible to purchase such cars and convert them into quarters for a limited number of the most senior bachelor NCO's.

The basic concept was to remove all the seats, patch the floor and install a partition across the center of each car dividing it into two equal apartments. The divider concept was changed after the first car to be a double closet wall. Each apartment had one closet in this two foot thick dividing wall. The back of each closet was plywood lightly nailed in place. In the event of a fire blocking the regular end door, the occupant could kick out the closet panel to escape through the other apartment.

A Tight Cost Limit

In 1971, a Post Commander had authority to approve local projects costing no more than \$25,000, if funds were available within his own resources. Fort Monmouth had an unused railroad spur which could accommodate seven cars. The spur was adjacent to a steam generating plant and close to water, sewage and power lines. It was convenient to the Post Exchange, commissary, snack bar, gymnasium, hospital, bank and post office. All in all, it was an ideal location. Colonel Vernon C. Devan, the Deputy Post Commander, was brought into the act and he provided dynamic leadership from the outset.

Army regulations pertaining to locally approved construction projects were voluminous. There are strict rules on which materials must be charged against the \$25,000 "ceiling." Some materials, such as surplus items from the Defense Property Disposal yards, must be accounted for, but aren't charged against the ceiling.

All man-hours expended must be reported. Hourly labor rates for military personnel are specified, but some labor costs are not charged against the \$25,000 limitation. One example is work performed in conjunction with training activities.

Thus the monthly training of a U.S. Army Reserve Engineer Battalion could contribute to the project without cost, although the man-hours had to be reported. Similarly, the Army then had a program called "Project Transition," designed to assist soldiers leaving the service to develop skills for civilian employment. Soldiers being trained as plumbers, electricians and carpenters could work on the project without their labor being charged against the ceiling. Volunteer labor during off-duty hours was also exempt.

The Facilities Engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Miesionczek, had his staff prepare plans which were massaged extensively by Colonel Devan and me, to eliminate the "nice to have" features in an effort to keep the total cost below \$25,000. Initial estimates indicated a seven car, 14 apartment, project could be completed within the \$25,000 limitation with due allowance for unforeseen cost overruns.

Penn Central

I then met with James Brunner, Superintendent of Passenger Equipment for the Penn Central railroad. Mr. Brunner provided a book with floor plans of all Penn Central passenger cars and discussed the pros and cons of various types of cars for the Fort Monmouth project.

Stainless steel cars were difficult and expensive to scrap,

so their demand was limited. They were the better looking car externally, so Mr. Brunner recommended we consider stainless. A few days later, he escorted Colonel Devan, other project officers and me on an inspection of dozens of cars the Penn Central had available as surplus.

We looked at numerous types and floor plans. The conclusion was the most suitable cars were standard open coaches with toilet/lounges at both ends. Since we planned to strip the seats and refurbish the cars, interior condition was of minor consequence.

The First Fort Monmouth Cars

Once I was satisfied we could get usable cars at a reasonable price and that the cost could be held below \$25,000, I approved the project, named "RAILFAN." Despite Penn Central's huge number of cars awaiting disposition, only six suitable for RAILFAN were immediately available. The six purchased were:

Former Pennsylvania Railroad coach 4018 built by the Budd Company in 1940, lot 96406, as a demonstration car for the New York World's Fair.

Former PRR coaches 4020, 4021 and 4025 built in 1940 by Budd, lot 96407.

Former PRR coach 4054 built in 1946 by Budd, lot 9613-008, drawing number D42-2214. This car is a sister to former Amtrak coach 5435 owned by Bluewater Michigan Chapter members Greg Leidheiser and Dan Monaghan, which is being prepared at the SEMTA Ojista car shops for operation in the Chapter's 1986 excursions. The 54-seat 5435 was PRR 4056. Another sister, the Eagle Cañon Passenger Car Corporation's 4055, formerly Amtrak 5434, has operated on lease in Chapter trains.

Former New York, New Haven & Hartford parlor car 400, once the *Connecticut River* and later the *New Britain*, was built in 1941 by Pullman, lot 6788, plan W46612. It was Penn Central 7115.

Site Preparation

In August 1971 Major William Dieal of Fort Monmouth's Facilities Engineer Division was appointed Project Officer and in September he was joined by Lieutenant Robert W. Harrington. Site preparation began in October.

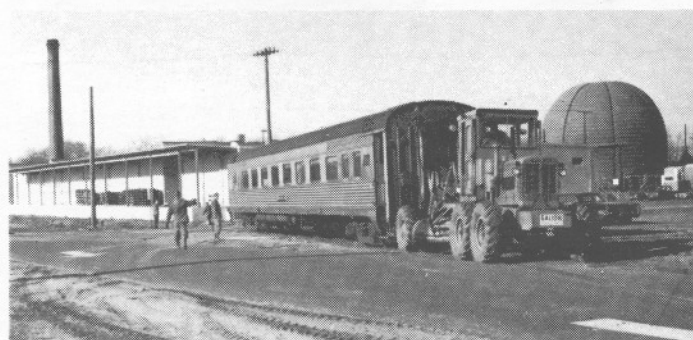
Meanwhile, Colonel Devan had worked out an agreement with the 469th Reserve Engineer Battalion (Construction) whereby they would perform monthly training at Fort Monmouth and work on RAILFAN. The battalion installed sewer, water, steam and power lines as well as doing a great deal of the interior conversion of the cars. Concurrently they worked on several other Fort Monmouth projects for which their heavy construction equipment was well suited. Without their wholehearted and extensive support, the project wouldn't have been feasible. In all respects theirs was a job "Well Done."

To keep costs within the limitation, I visited numerous federal property disposal yards where surplus and damaged property could be obtained by government agencies without charge. Most of the sewer, steam and water pipes as well as the power transformers, electrical wire and conduit were acquired that way.

In November 1971 the five coaches were delivered and spotted just inside the post gate. Delivery of the NYNH&H parlor car was delayed. Thanks to Penn Central's Mr. Brunner, all the cars were headed with the blind or non-

vestibule ends as desired. The cars had been vandalized a bit since we last saw them, but nothing of great consequence.

With a road grader and a tractor the cars were moved one at a time to their intended locations and blocked in place. The cars were placed next to a platform which had been used to bring supplies into two warehouses. This permitted entry from the platform at floor level.



WHO NEEDS A LOCOMOTIVE? - Former Penn Central Budd-built coach 4020 being moved into position along the floor-level platform. U.S. Army Photograph.

Refurbishing Begins

All seats in the main coach areas were unbolted and removed. The holes in the floor were filled with cement. Some sections of the wall-mounted luggage racks were left in each apartment. Broken windows were replaced.

Cars 4018, 4020, 4021 and 4025 had a large lounge at each end with a single toilet compartment off each lounge. In these cars, it was necessary to purchase shower stall kits and put them in a corner of the lounge. Car 4054 also had a large lounge at each end, but each lounge had two toilet compartments. In this car, one toilet was converted into a shower stall by adding plumbing, waterproofing the walls and pouring a new concrete floor with appropriate drainage.

Existing toilets from the "dump it on the track" school of design were replaced with standard fixtures connected to the sewage system. Water pipes and drain traps below the car floor were wrapped with heater tape down to the frost line. Later the open undersides were enclosed.

Cars 4018, 4020, 4021 and 4025 had three wash basins in each lounge, while 4054 had two basins in the women's lounge and three in the men's. Since only one basin was necessary for each apartment, the extras were used to replace broken fixtures.

An Electrical Dilemma

The existing electrical wiring was a nightmare. All the wires were black and most of the identifying labels had long since disappeared. Some ceiling fixtures had the center contact to the hot lead and others had the center connected to ground. Cars 4018, 4020, 4021 and 4025 were wired for 32 volt, 4054 was 110 volts and the yet undelivered 400 was wired for 64/220 volts.

Insulation was frayed and worn, and short circuits were numerous. No wonder the cars were difficult and costly to maintain when in their last years of service. The only practical solution was to rewire.

We replaced the wiring for all ceiling fixtures and lounge

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DIGGIN' DITCHES - Members of the 469th Army Reserve Engineer Battalion (Construction) performed weekend duty once a month on RAILFAN and other post projects. Here unit members are installing water service to Budd-built former Penn Central 4021. It's a chilly day judging by the hooded field jackets and gloves. The man with the wrench, however, has worked up enough body heat to brave the wind. U.S. Army Photograph.

RAILFAN Continued from page 9

receptacles with a 110 volt system. Existing circuit breaker panels were replaced with new panels in each apartment. Conduit was run on the surface of both walls beneath the windows with duplex outlets for lamps, radios, window air-conditioners and other appliances. Each car was electrically grounded.

Steam Heat

The heating systems presented a greater challenge. Each car had base board steam heat systems, which was a pipe run the full length of the car on each side with one control valve for each side. Had this arrangement been kept, neither apartment would have total control of its own heat.

The solution was to cut a short section out of each radiator pipe at the car center. Transverse pipes were installed under the closet floor connecting the side wall pipes in each apartment into a "U" shaped system providing individualized control. If the existing manual steam valve worked, it was used. If not, it was replaced and a wall-mounted thermostatic control installed.

CENTER PARTITION - The center closet wall studding is being installed by members of the 469th Army Reserve Engineer Battalion. Note the raised closet floor provides space for steam pipes. The wall radiator pipes were cut mid-car and connected to those on the opposite side, providing separate heating systems for each of the two apartments. U.S. Army photograph.

The existing air-conditioning was in dubious condition. Repair would have been prohibitively expensive. One window air-conditioner in each apartment was cheaper and provided each apartment individual control. Installation of window air-conditioners also generated spare glass, which turned out to be needed in the eight cars received as the second phase of RAILFAN. Mr. Brunner helped by providing glass from other cars destined to the scrap yard. Water leaks in roofs and around windows were sealed. The interiors were painted, wall-to-wall carpeting installed and standard government furniture provided. Thereafter, it was left to the tastes and ingenuity of the occupant to complete the interior decor.

NYNY&H

In January, 1972 the sixth car, NYNH&H parlor car 400, the *New Britain*, was received. This car had two toilet compartments at one end; one on each side of the aisle. The women's toilet had a small lounge associated with it, so this side was converted to a shower and dressing room combination.

The vestibule end of the car had no toilets, but large floor-to-ceiling luggage racks on each side next to the door. At this end there was a 14-seat lounge with seven arm chairs along each wall. The lounge was separated from the main section by two floor-to-ceiling etched glass partitions. It was decided to use this half of the car as a general lounge and recreation area for occupants of all the cars.

The Project Is Expanded

With six cars sited, space for a seventh at the end of that string and installation of utility services underway, it occurred to me that RAILFAN would be more cost effective if another seven cars were placed parallel to the first seven. They could share common utilities reducing the cost of installing the second seven.

Since this expansion would exceed my regulatory authority of \$25,000, approval would have to come from Headquarters, Department of the Army. I carried the proposal to Washington and was able to persuade the proper authorities to expand the project. Headquarters, Department of the Army assumed sponsorship of the project and with their authority, they approved and provided an additional \$25,000.

That winter of 1971-72, concurrent with modification of the first six cars, a new 700 foot siding was built parallel to the existing track. In December, Major Dieal was reassigned to Korea and Major William Seitz from the Army Electronics Command became Project Officer.

As soon as authority to expand RAILFAN to 14 cars was

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FINISHED "RAILFAN" APARTMENT - With windows hidden by drapes, this is a typical RAILFAN apartment "as issued" with standard government furnishings. The closet is behind the drapes on the center wall beyond the left side of the bed. U.S. Army Photograph.



RAILFAN *Continued from page 10*

received, Colonel Devan and I went looking for eight additional cars. By this time, many cars previously available had been scrapped or sold. A large number mortgaged to banks could not be sold until banking arrangements had been worked out. In matters of hundreds of millions of dollars, a request for eight old passenger cars was not going to accelerate decisions.

Amtrak had purchased many of the better cars and had a "hold" on large number of the remainder. Additionally, the surfeit of stainless steel cars had stimulated interest in better ways of scrapping them. Improved techniques had been found and we were now in competition with major purchasers for those cars still available.

This concludes Part 1 of Project "Railfan".

Part 2 will appear next month.

EDITORS NOTE: General Foster was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1941, just prior to the United States becoming involved in World War II. He served as a company commander in North Africa and Italy; commanded a battalion in Austria; commanded a Signal Group in Korea and the 18,500-man 1st Signal Brigade in Viet Nam. During Project RAILFAN, General Foster was Commanding General of Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, which was then the "home" of the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

General Foster has also served as Chief of Operations Research at the Army Electronics Proving Ground, Chief of Automatic Data Processing Systems Division in the Office of the Comptroller of the Army and as Signal Officer of the United Nations Command in Korea. He taught electrical engineering at West Point for three years and for two years at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command & General Staff College and of the Army War College and has a Master's Degree in Engineering from Purdue University. General Foster has also completed graduate studies at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

General Foster has been awarded the Army Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit four times, two Army Commendation medals and the Distinguished Service Medals of Korean and Viet Nam. He retired from the Army in 1975 after more than 34 years of active Federal Commissioned Service.

A member of the Bluewater Michigan Chapter since 1984, General Foster recently moved from West Bloomfield, Michigan to Furlong, Pennsylvania. He is working on a book on U.S. Army railway hospital cars.

EMBLEMS AND NAMES

Here's the emblem and newsletter name of the Jersey Central Chapter, NRHS:

JERSEY CENTRAL CHAPTER, NRHS

P.O. Box 700

Clark, New Jersey 07066

Jersey Central Lines

**LETTIN' OFF STEAM** *Continued from page 2*

academy for gifted children of junior high and high school age.

I feel very proud to be a part of the Bluewater Michigan Chapter and look forward to attending the meetings, when I visit my family in Southfield and Waterford. Maybe I can lend a hand at the Saturday work sessions.

Dean C. Gardner

Miami Shores, Florida

NOT ENOUGH HISTORY

The following is extracted from a letter Richard MacFarlane of Mass City, Michigan wrote to Membership Chairperson Jean Weible:

In not renewing my membership in the Society, I think I should make it clear I am not dissatisfied with the Society or how it is run. The fact is that I am really not so much a railroad buff as I am a historian. My milieu is the library, not the railroad car. I have been doing research on some of the railroads in the western Upper Peninsula, principally the Ontonagon & Brule River Railroad and its successors, the Milwaukee & Northern, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul and the Escanaba & Lake Superior as well as the Copper Range Railroad, the Mineral Range and its parent, the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic.

Richard D. McFarlane

The BLUEWATER SENTINEL is interested in publishing articles on Michigan railroads and other lines that may be of interest to our readership. We wrote Mr. MacFarlane asking that he submit an article. You don't have to be a member to contribute to the SENTINEL. Many of our articles have been by non-members. Send your contributions to: Editor, BLUEWATER SENTINEL, 1424 Iroquois Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48214-2716.

RAILROAD QUIZ

By Dave Briggs

Last month we asked: on what date was the Detroit Street Railways, DSR, finally phased out of existence? When the new City of Detroit Charter took effect on July 1, 1974, the city transit responsibilities were transferred to the new Detroit Department of Transportation, what we now call "D-DOT." You may wish to refer to the excellent book by Jack Schramm, Dick Henning and Bluewater Michigan Chapter member Tom Dworman, *Detroit's Street Railways, Volume II 1920-1956*.

The first correct answer came from Dick Fountain, who subjected his letter "I want a mug." Dick writes: "The Department of Street Railways officially ceased operation at midnight, June 30, 1974 and the Detroit Department of Transportation officially started operations July 1, 1974. In 1973, one of the main reasons for starting the Michigan Transit Museum, now housed in the Grand Trunk Western "Thomas Edison" depot in Mt. Clemens, was to save the last two pieces of rail equipment the DSR still had on the property when its Highland Park shops were torn down."

"John Maxfield paid to have the two work cars, 1981 and